
Tall Poppy Syndrome and its effect on work performance

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Science in Applied Psychology
at the University of Canterbury by Anna Dediu

University of Canterbury
Christchurch, New Zealand
2 February 2015

Research Supervisors: Associate Professor Christopher Burt, University of Canterbury,
Dr Joana R. C. Kuntz, University of Canterbury

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	3
List of Tables	4
Abstract	5
Introduction	6
The origin of the term Tall Poppy	6
What the term Tall Poppy means today	6
Early Tall Poppy Studies	7
Theories about Tall Poppies Syndrome Existence	10
Tall Poppy Syndrome and the Workplace	18
Current study hypotheses	19
Method	20
Design	20
Participants and Sampling	20
Materials and Measures	22
Personality measures: Need for Achievement and Affiliation	23
Decision-making scale: Avoidant, Dependent and Vigilant	24
Performance measure: Problem Solving	25
Performance measure: Creativity	25
Performance measure: Service Quality	25
Procedure	26
Results	26
Descriptive statistics for Performance measures	27
Tall Poppy scale	28
Influences of Tall Poppy Perception	29
Testing the main hypothesis	29
Decision-making Vigilance	30
Decision-making Dependability	31
Decision-making Avoidance	31
Creativity	32
Problem Solving	33
Internal Service Quality	34
Affiliation	35
Discussion	36
Theoretical and practical importance of the results	36
Dependent decision-making	37
Decision-making Avoidance	38
Internal Service Quality	39
Exceptions to the Tall Poppy Syndrome Rule	40
Limitations	42
Strengths	43
Suggestions for future research	43
Conclusion	44
References	45

Appendices	51
Appendix A – Message posted in LinkedIn groups	51
Appendix B – List of LinkedIn groups posted in	52
Appendix C – Facebook Advert	53
Appendix D – Reminder message	54
Appendix E - Work survey: information and consent.....	55

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my head supervisor Chris, whose ongoing patience, and knowledge have been an immense help to me. I will always be very grateful to him for all his encouragement. His belief in me enabled me to take risks in my studies that I may have never taken.

I would like to also acknowledge my second supervisor Joana for all her helpful feedback.

I am grateful to the participants of this study for their invaluable contribution, as this dissertation could not have happened otherwise.

I would also like to express my gratitude to my loved ones and my friends for inspiring me, and pushing me to always move forward. Their love and understanding throughout my academic career has given me purpose and strength.

List of Tables

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for Demographic Variables.....	27
Table 2: Descriptive statistics of instruments Performance and Personality measures	28
Table 3: Regression results for Tall Poppy Total Attitude.....	30
Table 4: Regression results for Decision-Making Dependability	31
Table 5: Regression results for Decision-Making Avoidance	32
Table 6: Regression results for Creativity	33
Table 7: Regression results for Problem Solving	33
Table 8: Regression results for Internal Service Quality	34
Table 9: Regression results excluding Age and Tenure	35
Table 10: Regression results for Affiliation	35

Abstract

The aim of this study was to find out whether employees would perform worse if they perceived their work colleagues to have negative attitudes towards *tall poppies* (colleagues favoured the fall of *tall poppies* rather than rewarding *tall poppies*), thus displaying typical *tall poppy syndrome* perceptions. Performance measures were: decision-making vigilance, decision-making dependence, decision-making avoidance, problem solving, creativity, service quality, and the personality construct need for affiliation. Control variables were age, tenure and need for achievement. The design of the study was cross-sectional, online surveys were used to collect the data. The link to the survey was distributed using LinkedIn groups and Facebook advertising, yielding a sample of 229 participants. The data was analysed using regression; the results confirmed 3 of the 7 hypotheses. The results indicated that employees working in an environment that favoured the fall of *tall poppies*, showed lower decision-making dependability and higher decision-making avoidance. Internal service quality was partially confirmed, it was negatively associated with participants working in an environment that favoured the fall of *tall poppies*, rather than reward; Theories about the contribution New Zealand's history has made to the development of *tall poppy syndrome* are considered. Practical implications of the results are discussed. Directions for future studies in industrial and organizational psychology on the effects of *tall poppy syndrome* on work performance are discussed.

Tall Poppy Syndrome and its effect on Work Performance

The Origin of the Term *Tall Poppy*

The earliest mention of *tall poppy* dates back to 500 B.C. written by Titus Livius Patavinus, a Roman historian. In *Levy*, Book I, Titus described the life of a Roman king named Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, who came to power by murdering his predecessor, and falsely accusing his opponents in court, which then resulted in their death. Tarquinius, like most Kings, wanted to expand his kingdom. He attempted to overtake the people of the town Gabii, however they succeeded in their efforts to resist him. He utilized a different strategy and sent his son Sextus to Gabii under false pretences. Upon his arrival to Gabii, Sextus claimed to fear his father, begging for the protection of the Gabii people. They trusted Sextus and later appointed him a commander with great power. Sextus subsequently sent a messenger to his father, to ask what course of action to take next. When the messenger arrived, Tarquinius did not give his answer in words or writing; he simply walked into his garden and with a stick began *striking the tallest poppies*. Sextus understood the meaning of his father's actions and began to wrongly accuse the most powerful members of Gabii. These men were put to death, one by one, leaving the town defenceless and at the mercy of the Romans. Tarquinius reigned as the king of the Romans between the years B.C 534 and 510 (Brown, 1946).

What the Term *Tall Poppy* Means Today

According to the Oxford dictionary of New Zealandisms, a *tall poppy* (TP) is “a conspicuously successful person, whose distinction attracts envy or hostility” (p. 275), the *tall poppy syndrome* (TPS) is described as “the tendency to disparage, or cut down to size, high achievers” (p. 275). A number of popular books on New Zealand slang, phrases and words also describe these terms in a similar manner. One such book by Cryer (2006), states

that the term originated in Australia and became more prominent after the politician Jack Lang was reported in the Canberra Times to have “made some *tall poppies* suffer, who could be made to suffer” by reducing pensions (The Canberra Times, 1934). The Oxford English dictionary refers to *tall poppy* and *tall poppy syndrome* as primarily an Australasian phenomenon. As such, the majority of studies conducted on *tall poppy syndrome* were authored by Feather, and collected data from Australians, primary in South Australia, (Feather, 1991).

Early Tall Poppy Studies

Feather’s first study was conducted in 1987, and it examined attitudes towards *tall poppies* in high schools. Feather found that student participants were more pleased when the *tall poppy* failed, than when a person of average ability failed. Participants were also more pleased when a high achiever fell to the middle in terms of performance, rather than to the bottom of the performance scale. Furthermore, participants varied in their attitude toward *tall poppies* based on how similar they were to the *tall poppies*; the more similar the participants were to the *tall poppy* the less pleased they were about their fall. Feather conducted a second study on attitudes toward *tall poppies* in the same year (1987). This study examined attitudes of University students toward *tall poppies*. Feather found that participants would employ harsher disciplinary actions toward *tall poppies* who cheated in a test, rather than average achievers who cheated. Once again, participants favoured the fall of high achievers over average achievers. Feather suggested that participants were suspicious of the *tall poppy*’s status in light of their hypothetical cheating on the test (Feather, 1989).

Following these studies, Feather constructed a *tall poppy* scale in 1989. Building on his findings, his aim was to determine whether results from his two previous studies that tested student attitudes toward *tall poppies* in academia, could be applied to *tall poppies* in

other situations or environments. The scale consisted of 20 items; in order to determine whether the attitude a participant may have toward *tall poppies* is more positive or more negative, half the items expressed positive attitudes towards *tall poppies*, and half expressed negative attitudes towards *tall poppies*. The scale items were designed to be general so as to apply to a wide range of contexts and people.

Using this scale Feather (1989) measured attitudes of 205 Adelaide participants from the general population. The results of that study indicated that participants who had more negative attitudes towards *tall poppies* also exhibited lower global self-esteem; additionally they placed less importance on achievement and social power values, in comparison with participants who had more positive attitudes towards *tall poppies*. Feather also tested whether political preference was suggestive of the participants value priorities; finding that participants who supported the Labour party were more likely to favour the fall of *tall poppies* and less likely to support rewarding *tall poppies* when compared with Liberal party supporters. His findings suggest that political preference may be an indicator of participant values that dictate attitudes toward *tall poppies*.

Following on from these findings, Feather, Volkmer and Mckee (1991) went on to study attitudes of University students toward *tall poppies* who were publicly successful in three primary industries; entertainment, sport and politics. They found that participants viewed *tall poppy* success more positively and were less pleased about the fall of a *tall poppy* if the *tall poppy* appeared to be deserving of their success, their achievement was attributed to internal causes and they had positive personality characteristics. Internal causes of success included hard work or effort, while the main positive characteristics included friendliness, high integrity and attractiveness. Participants were also less likely to have positive attitudes toward *tall poppies* if they were perceived as having personality characteristics such as being self-interested and egoistic. *Tall poppies* who gained their success due to internal causes,

rather than external help were perceived as deserving of their success and therefore were judged more positively. Once again, participants' responses were congruent with their political views. Feather, Volkmer, and McKee, (1991) suggested that how much *tall poppies* were cut down, may have depended on how they gained their success and what personality characteristics they were perceived to have. This study of publicly successful *tall poppies* also revealed that the general attitude was more positive towards sports figures considered to be *tall poppies*, compared to entertainment or political figures (Feather, Volkmer, & McKee, 1991).

Following on from the previous study of publicly successful *tall poppies*, Feather conducted another study using high school students in 1991. This time he also recorded attitudes towards one specific *tall poppy*, Ben Johnson an Olympic runner, who lost his gold medal after he was discovered to have been taking steroids to improve his performance. Findings showed that participants who were more competent and exhibited higher levels of self-esteem were more likely to reward the *tall poppy*. However, after Johnson's fall, participants with low global self-esteem were more sympathetic to Johnson's situation as they perceived him to be lowered and therefore more similar.

Feather and colleague studies have produced important findings about social attitudes towards *tall poppies*, and they explain attitudes about *tall poppies* as products of participants' internal perception of themselves and their values. The studies also raise some interesting questions such as: What role do political attitudes play in reflecting perceptions of *tall poppies* and where do these values come from? Why do individuals appear to prefer to level *tall poppies* to group norms? Why is success of others more likely to be met with negativity rather than positivity or even indifference? Some theories attempting to rationalize these findings and answer these questions are presented below.

Theories about *Tall Poppy Syndrome* Existence

Based on the definitions provided and research findings, *tall poppy syndrome* appears to be an act favouring the levelling of high achievers down to the group norm. As mentioned above Feather's findings suggest that participants were more pleased when a high achiever fell to the middle in terms of performance, rather than to the bottom of the performance scale (Feather, 1991). Generally levelling, or conforming to group norms, may be mistaken to be a sole characteristic of a collective society, found mainly in Asian countries such as China; a collective society is defined as "the subordination of individual goals to the goals of a collective" (Hui & Triandis, 1986, p. 244-245). Furthermore, collectivists are characterised as interdependent; more likely to ask for advice before making a decision; and avoid conflict (Shulruf, Hattie, & Dixon, 2007). In contrast, individualism is defined "the subordination of the goals of the collectives, to individual goals" (Hui & Triandis, 1986, p. 245).

Persons who are individualist are characterised as those who take on responsibility for their actions, who are competitive, with a desire to be unique (Dion & Dion, 1993; Shulruf, Hattie & Dixon, 2007). Both New Zealand and Australia are Western countries (Clark, 2009), Western countries are characterized as an individualistic societies, as opposed to collective societies (Hamid, 1994). Conformity is more likely to occur in a collective society, where norms are clearly defined. Given these facts it is intriguing that *tall poppy syndrome* appears to be an Australasian phenomenon. One possible answer is that because individualists put their personal goals ahead of group goals they are less likely to be encouraging of others success (Hui & Triandis, 1986). Another explanation consistent with individualist views is the similarity-attraction hypothesis offered by Feather (1991) (cited from Byrne, 1971). Feather (1991) suggests that people with low or average level of ability, identify less with high performers and therefore have less positive feelings towards them. Overall attitudes towards *tall poppies* appeared to be related to a person's self-esteem and

competence, meaning that those who believed themselves to be more competent saw themselves as more similar to the *tall poppy*, therefore they felt more positive towards them. The level of similarity influenced attitudes towards the *tall poppy*; when the tall poppy experienced a fall participants with low global self-esteem were more sympathetic towards the fallen *tall poppy* as they felt they could relate to him more now that he is levelled (Feather, 1991).

With Feather's (1989) findings about political values and their associations with attitudes towards *tall poppies* in mind, another theory is proposed. This theory considers New Zealand's political history as events that may have helped stimulate the development of levelling *tall poppies* resulting in the *tall poppy syndrome*. This theory is centred on egalitarian practices in New Zealand and refers back to the colony politics, present in the times of early Pakeha settlers. Egalitarianism is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as "believing in or based on the principle that all people are equal and deserve equal rights and opportunities", (Oxford Dictionary of English, 2010, p. 562).

New Zealand's egalitarian past earned it the title of "social laboratory" (Nolan, 2007, p. 113) because its government implemented experimental policies, such as an 8 hour working day, granted in 1840, that were viewed as progressive and liberal in the early 1900's. New Zealand's governments pursuit of social equality was largely reflected in the bills passed; the liberal government was the first in the world to grant women the right to vote in 1893, it also gave pensions to seniors in 1898 (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2014). These welfare practices attained the interest of foreign visitors; one such visitor, William Ranstead, was a reporter for Clarion, a London newspaper (Nolan, 2007). He wrote an article depicting his experiences of New Zealand; this article was also published in the Poverty Bay Herald (a Gisborne newspaper) on the 22nd of March 1900 (Ranstead, 1900).

Ranstead stated about New Zealand's political affairs:

“All progressive legislation of the past nine years is the work of the Liberal party, and it has proved so profitable to the country that during the present electoral campaign the Tories expressly disclaim any intention of repealing any of it.” (Ranstead, 1900, p. 3).

Ranstead wrote about New Zealand's social state:

“Here there is no aristocracy, no snobbery. There are no very rich people and no poor. I've not met a beggar ... or seen one destitute person. There are no slums here, no miserable starving women and no suffering children. Here no sober, industrious man need lack any of the comforts of life” (Ranstead, 1900, p. 3).

Perhaps the most significant egalitarian milestone in the political history of New Zealand, was the passing of the Social Security Act, referred to as ‘cradle to grave’ welfare, implemented by the Labour party in 1935 (Nolan, 2007). This perused the egalitarian ideal that all citizens should have a reasonable standard of living. New Zealand led the world in its egalitarian practices and announced their success nationally and internationally with the publishing and distribution of official year-books (Nolan, 2007). These books provided demographic and social information; trade, consumption, and economic activity such as income, as well as actions resulting in economic rewards. Between 2000 and 3500 books were sent overseas (Nolan, 2007). New Zealand's reforms were so successful that they were later employed by the British government (Nolan, 2007).

New Zealand was portrayed as a ‘workers’ paradise’ (Nolan, 2007, p. 114), and mediums such as film production were used for the promotion of New Zealand (Nolan, 2007). One such film ‘Meet New Zealand’, produced by the National film unit in 1949, depicted New Zealand as a land of prospering farming, fair and equal opportunities (Forlong,

1949). In New Zealand anyone could become a private farmer, if they were willing to work and learn from experienced farmers. Emphasis was placed on social welfare benefits such as free, mixed schooling of the same standard for children of both Maori and Pakeha, as well as medical care benefits regardless of financial status (Forlong, 1949). According to Nolan, (2007) between the years of 1893 and 1939 New Zealand's citizens were wealthier per capita, while politically as well as culturally more *egalitarian*, than Britain and the United States of America.

New Zealand's pursuit of egalitarianism was also at the forefront of the writings in the first encyclopaedia of New Zealand published in 1966 (Nolan, 2007). The section titled 'An Equalitarian Society', outlined New Zealand's desire to discard the class system, and obtain the ideals of social equality (Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, 1966). The article claimed that the first crucial step in this development, was the introduction of an old age pension (as mentioned above); as it made "... *no distinction between deserving and undeserving.*" (Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, 1966).

Both Egalitarianism and the *tall poppy syndrome* are subject to debate and are still highly discussed by New Zealand media; however these topics appear to be separate and unrelated when presented by the media. A search conducted on the website Stuff.co.nz, shows a total number of 84 articles mentioning New Zealand's egalitarianism traditions between the years of 2008 and 2014. New Zealand still appears to have the outward image of pursuing egalitarian traditions, such as social and financial equality. This is particularly true in Labour politics; the Labour party MP's often refer to egalitarianism traditions as their 'roots'. Helen Clark, a previous Prime Minister of New Zealand, delivered an influential valedictory speech on the 8th of April 2009, she stated the following about egalitarianism in New Zealand:

"I have always been very proud of New Zealand's egalitarian traditions. Deep in our country's roots is the ethos that Jack is as good as his master, and these days we must say that Jill is as good as her mistress. Many of our forebears came to this land to escape the class-bound nature of Britain, where their place in the economic and social order was largely prescribed from birth and could not be escaped from. I deeply detest social distinction and snobbery, and in that has always lain my strong aversion to titular honours, because to me they relate to another era that our nation largely has evolved from, but obviously not entirely freed itself from at this time." (Clark, 2009).

More recently David Parker a Labour deputy leader and finance spokesman announced in his speech at the labour party congress;

"We believe that a rising tide of economic growth should lift all boats, not just the super yachts." David goes on to say, *"I am an egalitarian politician and I'm here because I know that's what Labour's here for too"* (Parker, 2014).

Unlike egalitarian traditions in the media, the majority of *tall poppy syndrome* related media attention consists of debating its existence and effects. *Tall poppy syndrome* has been referred to as "a kiwi stereotype that we've now outgrown" in a segment on 3 News (2013). This segment featured an interview of an Auckland Savings Bank representative who assured that kiwis are "reticent about their celebrating their success" (Taylor, 2013) and the success of others, according to the findings of Auckland Saving Bank researchers. The overall news segment perpetuated the idea that if *tall poppy syndrome* has had any effects, they are in the past, and it is now subdued for a diverse number of reasons (Taylor, 2013). It should be noted that the Auckland Savings Bank study could not be found at this time to confirm these findings.

The other side of the debate admits that New Zealanders have issues with celebrating success; and this is visible from behaviours observed in the schools. TV One conducted an interview with John Cowan a parenting expert; Cowan brought to attention that public recognition of academic success appeared to have hindered the children's later performance in that area. This was due to the embarrassment of being made fun of by their friends after they were publicly recognised for their success. Cowan was adamant that children often "pull back in their achievements" (Television New Zealand Limited, 2013), in order to avoid receiving criticism from their peers. Cowan went on to say that;

"You (children) can be humble, but you can also strive for excellence, that you go for the win but you don't need the applause from the grand stand quite so much that's putting your self-esteem in other people's hands", "There is a nice humility amongst New Zealanders, there is a Maori proverb, that kumara does not speak of its own sweetness", "the tall poppy syndrome is a sort of immature and nasty edge to that characteristic, the idea that we are having to pull down and criticize those people that raise up, we don't mind our tall poppies as long as they are planted in good muck", "We don't mind knighthoods, as long as they are given to butchers, we like the fact that Ed Hillary had his number in the phone book..", "That's Us!" (Cowan, Television New Zealand Limited, 2013).

It is debatable whether New Zealand had ever reached the ideals of an egalitarian state. However, this long pursuit resulted in the view that New Zealand should not have snobbery, distinction or class, appears to have had an effect on the population's cultural and social identity resulting in negative attitudes towards the recognition of *tall poppies*.

This theory is reflected in the findings of an unpublished PhD thesis from the Department of Education at Canterbury University by Trapper (2014). Trapper collected data

in New Zealand by interviewing academically gifted high school students (*academic tall poppies*), their parents and their teachers, about challenges facing these adolescents. She found the students recognised modesty and humility as preferred New Zealand values and felt that these were societal expectations; as a result, students engaged in self-deprecation to remain within group norms (Tapper, 2014). Furthermore, the student's desire to fit in with their peers, also appeared to influence their decision-making when it came to academic performance. Students were particularly uncomfortable with being publicly recognized for their achievements. When complimented about their abilities, students tended to level themselves to their peers. Students found it difficult to declare how good they were at something, as they feared it may be viewed by their peers as acting "up themselves" (Tapper, 2014, pg 260). Students also expressed their concern that appearing to be smart or acting academically better than others could result in being socially disliked and ostracized (Tapper, 2014).

Students displayed an awareness of what was socially appropriate and some attempted to separate themselves from the gifted or talented identity (Tapper, 2014). Trapper also found that the students received mixed messages about achievement; on one hand they should reach their potential, on the other, achieving highly did not appear to always be desirable in their socio-cultural context (Tapper, 2014). Both students and parents were concerned that they may sound elitist when asked to refer to themselves or their children as high achievers who are talented or gifted; instead they tended to be modest about their abilities. One parent even described the lack of enthusiasm to give credit to those who are high achievers as "the *tall poppy* Kiwi thing" (Tapper, 2014, pg 200). Based on these findings, Trapper (2014) speculated that some students may not reach their full potential in terms of performance. Trapper went on to say that New Zealand's culture was strongly influenced by egalitarian traditions. Both parents and students appeared to have strong belief in egalitarian values of

fair opportunities for everyone. To cement this argument, Trapper cited Cross (2001) who stated, “our schools have increasingly become a setting where all of society’s values interact” (p. 43).

Trapper’s (2014) theory was echoed in a journal article by Gross (1989), which outlined a possible explanation for students not achieving to their full potential. Gross referred to this effect as the Forced-Choice Dilemma, this is where students are forced to choose between achieving to their potential and obtaining intimacy with their peers, both functions crucial to their development.

Trappers (2014) findings were consistent with Kirkwood (2007), who found that a high number of New Zealand entrepreneurs have experienced *tall poppy syndrome* and developed coping strategies such as; concealing their wealth and business ownership to keep from gaining attention, being careful to not show off. Kirkwood’s sample consisted of 40 entrepreneurs based in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. This qualitative study aimed to find how *tall poppy syndrome* impacted New Zealand entrepreneurs. Kirkwood found that more than half of the participants in the study had experienced *tall poppy syndrome*. These entrepreneurs were negatively affected by *tall poppy syndrome* and they felt deterred from starting new businesses. Most alarmingly of all, *tall poppies* reported intentionally restricting the progress of their businesses in order to keep away from the public eye and avoid negative attention, similar to Trapper’s (2014) findings of students attempting to keep from gaining attention. It is clear from these findings that *tall poppies* work output may be seriously influenced by the *tall poppy syndrome*.

Tall Poppy Syndrome and the Workplace

So far, the theory suggests that *tall poppy syndrome* is a cultural tradition of levelling high achievers to group norms, which had developed as a by-product of New Zealand's long pursuit of egalitarian ideals, which are still in some ways perused in New Zealand politics today. Past New Zealand research suggests that young adults and their parents recognized modesty and humility as socially important values, and therefore engaged in behaviours that pertained to those values, such as engaging in self-deprecation and self-levelling (Tapper, 2014). New Zealand entrepreneurs were also affected by *tall poppy syndrome*, and were reported to deliberately constrict the progress of their businesses to stop from gaining success, which was assumed to also bring negative attention and negative attitudes socially (Kirkwood, 2007). In both studies, the participants showed an awareness of negativity that publicly recognized success attracted. Both entrepreneurs and students preferred to avoid public recognition, moreover, the parents of the student participants were also aware of such negativity.

Upon reviewing these findings it is important to consider that experiences of *tall poppy syndrome* may not be exclusive to high achievers or *tall poppies*, as *tall poppy syndrome* can be broken down into attitudes that can be witnessed and experienced from an observer's point of view. Those who have observed the effects of *tall poppy syndrome* or experienced it personally may also be discouraged from performing to their full potential. As stated previously *tall poppy syndrome* appears to be a by-product of New Zealand's egalitarian past, resulting in some of the most esteemed New Zealand's recognized values. These values are transferable to all aspects of everyday life including to the workplace in the form of behaviour i.e., acting modestly, humble about their achievements, and engaging in self-deprecation to level themselves to their peers. Seeing the negative attitudes brought on by successes may also act as a deterrent from higher achievement. Therefore, it should be

considered that tall poppy syndrome's occurrence may have significant effects on productivity and career advancement in the workplace. Employees working in close quarters typically share similarities in attitudes and values because of their constant communication and exchange of ideas. Some people even adjust their attitudes in order to fit in with their peers; this is common as people are very social animals, who have evolved to rely on others for survival (Grey, 2007).

Current Study Hypotheses

This study examined whether participants work performance was affected by what attitudes they perceive their colleagues to have about *tall poppies* in their workplace. None of the previous studies have attempted to determine whether *tall poppy syndrome* attitudes have any influences on others, other than just the *tall poppies*. Thus in terms of the research conducted on *tall poppies* so far, the proposed study appears to be unique. The study sampled people at work, and significant relationships found in this study have the potential to provide a greater understanding of the relationship between *tall poppy syndrome* and employee work performance.

The study examined the relationships between experiences of *tall poppy syndrome* in the workplace and several performance indicators, these are; decision-making, problem-solving, creativity, service quality as well as one personality indicator and need for affiliation. These performance indicators were selected, as they are functionally relevant to a broad spectrum of positions (jobs). The study tested 7 hypotheses, after controlling for the influence of the personality construct need for achievement, as well as age, and tenure. Overall, it was predicted that perceiving a high or strong *tall poppy syndrome* environment in one's workplace, would be associated with lower performance outcomes. Hypothesis 1: Perceived negative attitudes towards *tall poppies* in the workplace will decrease decision-making

vigilance; Hypothesis 2: Perceived negative attitudes towards *tall poppies* in the workplace will decrease decision-making dependability; Hypothesis 3: Perceived negative attitudes towards *tall poppies* in the workplace will increase decision-making avoidance; Hypothesis 4: Perceived negative attitudes towards *tall poppies* in the workplace will decrease creativity; Hypothesis 5: Perceived negative attitudes towards *tall poppies* in the workplace will decrease problem solving; Hypothesis 6: Perceived negative attitudes towards *tall poppies* in the workplace will decrease internal service quality; Hypothesis 7: Perceived negative attitudes towards *tall poppies* in the workplace will decrease need for affiliation.

Method

Design

The design of the study was cross-sectional, as the research involved administration of a survey and the collection of data on all variables at the same point in time. The data was used to test the predictions about relationships between *tall poppy syndrome* and performance constructs.

Participants and Sampling

The survey generated 321 responses in total upon its closing; these responses were examined for analysis. Subsequently, the data set was reduced to N= 229 complete cases, due to a large amount of missing data in 92 cases. Participants included 118 working females with mean age of 39.4 and SD = 11.63 and 111 working males with mean age of 43.7 (SD = 13.5). Average job tenure was 46.13 months with SD 50.38 for the females, and average job tenure was 56.4 months and SD of 69.3 for the male participants. The participants were sampled using the haphazard sampling method (Weisberg & Bowen, 1977). Using this

sampling procedure, the participants targeted were those in jobs that were relevant to the constructs being measured. Thus any individual that worked in a job that required them to make decisions, engage in problem solving, serve clients, and be creative in their thinking was eligible to participate. The participants were recruited using online networking sites such as LinkedIn and Facebook.

LinkedIn was chosen as a means of distribution for the survey link as it is a professional internet network that is also the largest among their competitors with over 332 million professional members worldwide and over 1 million in New Zealand (LinkedIn Corporation , 2015). LinkedIn is a site designed for networking with other professionals; tools such as Groups facilitate the exchange of information. Groups are typically formed to connect professionals in the same field of work or with similar professional interests. The survey link and message (appendix A) was posted in LinkedIn professional groups deemed as relevant to the conditions of the study; groups that were industry based were targeted such as hospitality, IT, human resources, construction, designers, engineers, health professionals, telecommunications, sciences, and tourism. For the full list of groups posted in please refer to appendix B.

Facebook was chosen as a second medium to distribute the link because it is one of the largest social networks in the world, with 2 million New Zealand users; a screen shot of the advertisement circulated is provided in appendix C. Facebook only advertised to people over 18 years of age in New Zealand, as this option was chosen by the researcher. The advert was circulated for 30 days exactly, at a response rate of 12-22 clicks per day. The Facebook advert featured the same link to the survey. The survey stayed active between the dates of August 7th and October the 20th. A reminder was sent out using both internet mediums two weeks before the survey was closed (appendix D).

It is not possible to accurately calculate the response rate because there is no way of telling how many of the group members saw the post; LinkedIn provides an option to

unsubscribe from group notifications and posts. Although it is possible to sum up the number of clicks on the Facebook advert, it is not possible to tell how many people actually completed the survey and how many clicked out of it.

Materials and Measures

The survey was administered via Qualtrics online survey software. Qualtrics online survey software was used to both structure and administer the survey. The software allowed for a consent and information page (appendix E). The participant had the option to either agree to participate or not, once they read the information and gave their consent by clicking “Yes”. They would then click “next” at the bottom of the page and the second page would load gathering descriptive data. Descriptive information consisted of age, sex, and occupation, number of years in the industry and number of years in their current position, finally, how many co-workers or people they interacted with regularly.

After filling out their details and clicking “next”, a block of questions would load. Qualtrics settings were adjusted to load blocks of questions randomly for each participant; meaning once an applicant completed the information page and the descriptive information page they would receive the blocks of questions in a different order from any other applicant throughout the survey; this was done to avoid any order effects. As an incentive, the participants were also given the option to go into a draw to win one of three Westfield gift vouchers valued at \$25.00, \$50.00 and \$150.00. Information for entry into the prize draw was collected separately to the survey.

The performance constructs measured *decision-making (Avoidant, Dependent and Vigilant)*, *problem solving, creativity, and service quality*. The personality characteristics measured were *need for achievement* and *need for affiliation*. The *tall poppy syndrome* construct measure was the perception of *tall poppy syndrome* in the participant’s work

context. All scale items were responded to using a 5 point Likert scale where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, and 4 = agree and 5= strongly agree.

The measure used for the *tall poppy* construct was an adapted version using 17 items, originally constructed by Feather (1989). The items were slightly adapted for this study in order to gather information about what the participants thought other employee's (their co-workers) attitudes were about *tall poppies*. For example "People who are very successful deserve all the rewards they get for their achievements" was adjusted to, "In my organization employees feel, people who are very successful deserve all the rewards they get for their achievements". The scale had two factors; one factor favouring the fall and the other favouring the reward of the *tall poppy*. Feather (1989) reported acceptable reliability alphas of .85 for the positive attitude items and an alpha of .80 for the negative attitude items in the scale. Feather, Volkmer, and McKee (1991) reported a coefficient alpha of .76 for positive attitude questions and a coefficient alpha of .78 for negative attitudes.

In this study the coefficient alphas are .89 for favoured fall and .75 for favoured reward. A larger score on the 8 positive attitude items (1, 4, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 17,) indicates more positive attitudes towards tall poppies, while a large score in the 9 negative attitude items (2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12, 15, 16,) indicates more negative attitudes toward *tall poppies*. The scales were utilized by producing a single score (*tall poppy* total attitude score) by reverse coding the favour reward score, thus the total attitude score indicated the level of negative attitudes towards the *tall poppy*.

Personality Measures Need for Achievement and Affiliation

To measure *need for achievement* and *need for affiliation*, the ten item scales developed by Heckert, et al., (1999) were used. Example items are; for achievement "I try to perform

my best at work”, for affiliation “I spend a lot of time talking to other people”. The scale was scored by summing the ratings and dividing the product by the number of items. The achievement scale has an alpha score of .81, and affiliation scale an alpha score of .77 (Heckert, et al., 1999). Both alphas are acceptable. A test-retest reliability of $r = .64$ has been found for achievement, and .73 for affiliation (Heckert, et al., 1999). A higher score on a scale means a larger need for achievement and affiliation. In this study the coefficient alphas are .70 for affiliation and .81 for achievement.

Performance Measure Decision-Making Avoidant, Dependent and Vigilant

To measure decision-making, a scale constructed by Leykin and Derubeis, (2010) was used measuring avoidant, dependent and vigilant decision-making. Example items are “I don’t make decisions unless I really have to” for avoidant decision-making, “I do not seek advice from others when I make decisions” for dependent decision-making and “When making decisions I like to collect lots of information” for vigilant decision-making. These scales were also scored by summing the ratings and dividing the product by the number of items. The larger the score on these scales, the more avoidant, dependent or vigilant the participant’s decision-making was reported to be. In the first study conducted by Leykin and Derubeis, (2010) a coefficient alpha of 0.88 was reported for the avoidant scale, the dependent scale measured at 0.82, the vigilant scale had a coefficient alpha of 0.78. In the second study they reported a coefficient alpha of 0.93 for the avoidant scale, 0.87 for the dependent scale, and 0.87 for the vigilant scale, all indicating a good internal consistency. The scale was later employed by Dewberry, Juanchich and Nar, (2013) who confirmed the scales good internal consistency at .93 for the avoidance scale, .83 for dependent scale and .92 for the vigilant scale. In this study the coefficient alphas are .89 for decision-making avoidance, .68 for decision-making dependent and .82 for decision-making vigilant.

Performance Measure Problem Solving

To measure problem solving an 11 item scale developed by Heppner and Petersen (1979) was used. Example items are as follows, “I am usually able to think up creative and effective alternatives to solve a problem” and “I trust my ability to solve new and difficult problems”. The scoring of the scale was done by scored by summing the ratings and dividing the product by the number of items. A larger score reflected higher problem solving confidence. Heppner and Petersen (1979) reported an alpha value of .85, also indicated a good internal consistency. The test-retest reliability for problem solving confidence was reported at $r = .85$. In this study the coefficient alpha for the problem solving scale was .83.

Performance Measure Creativity

The 13 item scale by Zhou and George (2001) was used to measure creativity. All of the items were adjusted to be self evaluative, for example “Suggests new ways to achieve goals or objectives” was changed to “I suggest new ways to achieve goals or objectives” and “Exhibits creativity on the job when given the opportunity to” was changed to “I exhibit creativity on the job when given the opportunity to”. This scale was also scored by summing the ratings and dividing the product by the number of items. Zhou and George (2001) reported internal consistency for the scale at 0.79. Internal consistency demonstrated improvement in a study conducted by George and Zhou (2007) who found the coefficient alpha to be at .94. In this study the coefficient alpha for creativity was .90.

Performance Measure Internal Service Quality

Internal service quality was measured with a nine-item scale by Boshoff and Mels (1995). Items five to nine were adjusted; original item five contained the words ‘proposal form’, as this survey needed to accommodate a wide range of positions the words were omitted from the item, examples as follows, “When problems occur with regard to the

proposal form, I try to solve them as soon as possible”, this item was changed to “When problems occur I try to solve them as soon as possible”. Similarly item nine contained the words ‘submission office’ and these were also omitted; “I treat all submission office staff members courteously” was changed to “I treat all staff members courteously”. Like scales presented before it, this scale was scored by summing the ratings and dividing the product by the number of items. Boshoff and Mels (1995) reported a coefficient alpha of 0.89 for the scale, and Malhotra and Mukherjee reported a .88 coefficient alpha. In this study the coefficient alpha for internal service quality was .70.

Procedure

Once the link was distributed online, the participants would click the link which would take them to the introduction page of the survey (Appendix E). Participants were informed that the survey was a measure of Workplace Attitudes; this page also included consent information, and consent options. Once the participants agreed to the terms and conditions they completed the survey while online. Each survey took between 7 to 25 minutes to complete depending on the participant. The participants did not receive any debriefing after completing the survey as they completed the survey in their own time, making it difficult for the researcher to reach them.

Results

While the analysed sample of 229 provided complete data for the main study variables, there was still some missing data, as eight participants did not provide information about how many people they regularly interacted with. Furthermore, one participant did not report how long they had worked in their current job. No attempt was made to replace this missing data. The descriptive statistics for age, tenure in current job, tenure in industry, and number of co-

workers are displayed in Table 1. Inspection of Table 1 indicates the means, standard deviations, and range, minimum and maximum scores are what might be expected from a haphazard sample, and importantly indicate that the sample, on average, has had a reasonable degree of time in their current workplace.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics for demographic variables

Variables	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Age (in years)	229	50	20	70	41.50	12.76
Tenure in job (months)	228	407	1	408	51.13	60.39
Tenure in industry (months)	229	563	1	564	148.19	132.23
Number of co-workers regularly interacted with	221	200	0	200	20.97	29.51

Descriptive Statistics for Performance Measures

The data was analysed for outliers (± 3 standard deviations from the variable mean), four were detected. However, removal of the outliers from the data set did not show any significant changes to the results. As such, the results reported below are based on all 229 cases. Descriptive statistics, including mean, range, maximum and medium were calculated for the performance measures (*internal service quality, creativity, decision-making avoidance, decision-making dependability, decision-making vigilant, achievement, affiliation, problem solving*), and for the tall poppy measure (*favoured fall of tall poppy and favoured reward of tall poppy*). These results are displayed in Table 2. Inspection of the

means, standard deviations, and ranges shown in Table 2 indicate that the variables are normally distributed to allow for detection of relationships using correlations. That is, there were no apparent range restriction issues.

Table 2
Descriptive statistics of instruments: performance and personality measures

	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
TP* Favour Fall	3.67	1.00	4.67	2.6	.74
TP* Favour Reward	3.13	1.38	4.50	3.3	.54
Service quality	2.11	2.89	5.00	4.1	.41
Creativity	2.54	2.46	5.00	4.0	.54
DM*: Avoidance	3.60	1.00	4.60	2.1	.82
DM*: Dependability	3.33	1.67	5.00	3.5	.56
DM*: Vigilant	3.17	1.83	5.00	4.1	.51
Achievement	2.60	2.40	5.00	4.4	.53
Affiliation	3.60	1.20	4.80	3.2	.67
Problem solving	2.27	2.73	5.00	4.0	.42

*DM = Decision-Making, *TP = Tall Poppy

Tall Poppy Scale

The *tall poppy* scale produced two scores. A correlation analysis was carried out on the *tall poppy* favour fall and *tall poppy* favour reward scales, the analysis showed a negative relationship ($r = -.528$, $n = 229$, $p = .000$). A *tall poppy* total score was computed by reverse coding ratings from the favour reward subscale items, then adding the ratings from both scales together and dividing by the number of items (17). The *tall poppy* total score is an

indicator of negative attitudes toward *tall poppies* meaning the degree to which work colleagues favour the fall of *tall poppies*. The *tall poppy* total score yielded a mean of 2.6, a standard deviation of .57, minimum range of 1.29 and maximum range of 4.59.

Influences on Tall Poppy Perceptions

Prior to testing the study hypotheses, the data was examined for relationships between *tall poppy* perceptions and gender, age, job, industry tenure as well as number of co-workers. The correlation analysis indicated non-significant relationships between the *tall poppy* total scale score and age ($r = -.012$, $n = 229$, $p = ns$), job tenure ($r = -.052$, $n = 228$, $p = ns$), industry tenure ($r = -.056$, $n = 229$, $p = ns$), and number of colleagues interacted with regularly ($r = .017$, $n = 221$, $p = ns$). ANOVA analysis was used to test for differences in *tall poppy* perception between males and females. The analysis showed no differences in *tall poppy* perception between female ($M = 2.66$, $SD = .60$) and male ($M = 2.60$, $SD = .53$) participants, ($F(1,227) = .668$, $p = ns$).

Testing the Main Hypotheses

In order to test the study hypotheses, regression analysis was conducted, the results are displayed in Tables 3 to 10. Four predictor variables were used in all regression analyses: *tall poppy total scale score*; *need for achievement*; *age*; *tenure in current job* (note that *achievement*, *age* and *tenure* were entered as predictors as these variables could positively influence a person's job performance). The dependent variables were *decision-making vigilance*, *decision-making dependability*, *decision-making avoidance*, *creativity*, *problem solving*, *internal service quality* and *affiliation*. It should be noted that all negative beta weights were examined using scatter plots in order to determine the nature of the relationships.

Decision-Making Vigilance

Hypothesis 1: Perceived negative attitudes towards *tall poppies* in the workplace will decrease decision-making vigilance. The regression showed a significant model overall (see Table 3); the independent variables were examined to evaluate their individual contribution to the model. It was found that achievement and tenure were significant, and predicted decision-making vigilance. Age was also significant but had a negative relationship with decision-making vigilance. *Tall poppy* total scale score was not a significant predictor of decision-making vigilance. Thus, there was no support for hypothesis 1. The positive relationship between achievement and decision-making vigilance suggests that participants who are more inclined to need achievement, are also more vigilant in their decision-making. The positive relationship between tenure and decision-making vigilance suggests that participants who had been working in their current position longer, are more vigilant in their decision-making. Lastly, the non-significant relationship between decision-making vigilance and *tall poppy* total scale indicates that decision-making vigilance was not influenced by the presence of *tall poppy* attitudes.

Table 3: Regression results for Tall Poppy Total Attitude

	B	SE	β	P
DM: Vigilance				
Tall Poppy total scale	-.01	.05	-.01	.85
Achievement	.19	.06	.21	.00*
Age	-.00	.00	-.14	.04**
Tenure	.00	.00	.15	.03**

Note. N= 229; *p<.001. **p<.05

$R^2 = .67$, $F(4, 223) = 3.98$, $p = .004$

Decision-Making Dependability

Hypothesis 2: Perceived negative attitudes towards *tall poppies* in the workplace will decrease decision-making dependability. The regression model was significant (see Table 4); the *tall poppy* total scale and age were significant predictors. Furthermore, they were both negatively correlated with decision-making dependence. The relationship between the *tall poppy* total scale and decision-making dependence suggests that the participants who experienced more negative attitudes toward *tall poppies*, were also less likely to need and seek advice or support of their colleagues when making work related decisions. The significant age results suggest that younger participants are more inclined to seek advice from their colleagues. Thus, there was support for hypothesis 2.

Table 4: Regression results for Decision-Making Dependability

	B	SE	β	P	
DM: Dependability					$R^2 = .045$, $F(4,223) = 2.646$, $p = .034$
Tall Poppy total scale	-.15	.06	-.15	.02**	
Achievement	-.02	.06	-.02	.71	
Age	-.00	.00	-.15	.03**	
Tenure	.00	.00	.08	.21	

Note. N= 229; ** $p < .05$.

Decision-Making Avoidance

Hypothesis 3: Perceived negative attitudes towards *tall poppies* in the workplace will increase decision-making avoidance. The regression model was significant (see Table 5); variables need for achievement and age were significant predictors and negatively related to decision making-avoidance. The *tall poppy* total scale was also a significant predictor, and positively associated with decision-making avoidance. The relationship between achievement and decision-making avoidance suggests that participants who are achieving or needing

achievement less, are more likely to avoid making decisions. The age results suggests that the younger the participant the more they avoid making decisions. Finally, the results suggest that as *tall poppy* attitudes in the workplace increase so too does decision-making avoidance behaviours. Thus, there was support for hypothesis 3.

Table 5: Regression results for Decision-Making Avoidance

	B	SE	β	P
DM: Avoidance				
				$R^2 = .159, F(4,223) = 10.54, p = .000$
Tall Poppy total scale	.19	.08	.13	.02**
Achievement	-.33	.09	-.21	.01*
Age	-.01	.00	-.28	.00*
Tenure	.00	.00	.02	.66

Note. N= 229; *p \leq .01. **p<.05

Creativity

Hypothesis 4: Perceived negative attitudes towards *tall poppies* in the workplace will decrease creativity. The regression model was significant (see Table 6): variables achievement and age were significant and positively associated with creativity, while both *tall poppy* total scale and tenure were not significant. The results suggest that the more the participants pursue and have need for achievement, the more they are likely to be creative in their thinking. Furthermore, rated creativity increased with age in the sample. There was no support for hypothesis 4.

Table 6: Regression results for Creativity

	B	SE	β	P	
Creativity					$R^2 = .173$, $F(4, 223) = 11.65$, $p = .000$
Tall Poppy total scale	.02	.05	.02	.67	
Achievement	.37	.06	.36	.00*	
Age	.00	.00	.18	.00*	
Tenure	-.00	.00	-.11	.09	

Note. N= 229; * $p < .001$.

Problem Solving

Hypothesis 5: Perceived negative attitudes towards *tall poppies* in the workplace will decrease problem solving. The regression model was significant (see Table 7). Achievement was the only significant predictor, and was positively associated with problem solving. These results indicate that those who have a higher need for achievement are more confident at problem solving. Thus, there was no support for hypothesis 5.

Table 7: Regression results for Problem Solving

	B	SE	β	P	
Problem solving					$R^2 = .117$, $F(4, 223) = 7.39$, $p = .000$
Tall Poppy total scale	-.03	.04	-.04	.52	
Achievement	.23	.05	.30	.00*	
Age	.00	.00	.11	.09	
Tenure	-1.70	.00	-.00	.97	

Note. N= 229; * $p < .001$.

Internal Service Quality

Hypothesis 6: Perceived negative attitudes towards *tall poppies* in the workplace will decrease service quality. The overall regression model was significant (see Table 8). The only variable that was significant in this model is achievement. However, the *tall poppy* total scale was very close to being significant with a p value of .06.

Table 8: Regression results for Internal Service Quality

	B	SE	β	P	
Service quality					$R^2 = .237$, $F(4,233) = 17.29$, $p = .000$
Tall Poppy total scale	-.08	.04	-.11	.06	
Achievement	.34	.04	.44	.00*	
Age	.00	.00	.04	.51	
Tenure	.00	.00	.04	.46	

Note. N= 229; * $p < .001$.

To investigate hypothesis 6 further the model was ran again, this time removing the non-significant independent variables (age and tenure) displayed in Table 8. The new model indicated the there was no significant change $R^2 = .231$, $\Delta R^2 = -.004$, $F(1,224)$, $p = (ns)$ (see Table 9). However, the increased power of the analysis decreased the P value for *tall poppy* total scale to .055. The result suggests that participants who have a higher need for achievement are also more likely to provide good internal service quality in their workplace, while a work environment with negative attitudes towards *tall poppies* is associated with less service quality, thus there was partial support for hypothesis 6.

Table 9: Regression results excluding Age and Tenure

	B	SE	β	P	
Service quality					$R^2 = .231$, $F(2,225) = 33.86$, $p = .000$
Tall Poppy total scale	-.08	.04	-.11	.05	
Achievement	.35	.04	.45	.00*	

Note. N= 229; * $p < .001$.

Affiliation

Hypothesis 7: Perceived negative attitudes towards *tall poppies* in the workplace will decrease need for affiliation. The overall regression model for affiliation was also significant (see Table 10). Only achievement was significant as a predictor. Achievement had a positive relationship to affiliation; as such, participants who are higher in achievement are higher in seeking social interactions with their colleagues. None of the other independent variables have any effect on participants seeking social interactions with their colleagues. Thus, there was no support for hypothesis 7.

Table 10: Regression results for Affiliation

	B	SE	β	P	
Affiliation					$R^2 = .050$, $F(4, 223) = 2.94$, $p = .021$
Tall Poppy total scale	-.12	.26	-.03	.63	
Achievement	.90	.27	.21	.00*	
Age	.00	.01	.003	.97	
Tenure	-.00	.00	-.03	.64	

Note. N= 229; * $p \leq .001$.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to find whether working in an environment that was perceived to favour the fall of *tall poppies* over rewarding *tall poppies*, had any effect on employee performance.

The results of this study supported hypotheses 2 and 3, while hypothesis 6 was partially confirmed. The results indicated that employees working in an environment that favoured the fall of *tall poppies* showed lower decision-making dependability; meaning employees were less likely to rely on others in their work environment to help them make decisions and ask for advice. Furthermore, employees in this environment were also more likely to engage in decision-making avoidance by prolonging the process of decision-making. The results also indicated that internal service quality was likely to partially suffer, meaning employees who reported working in an environment that favoured the fall of *tall poppies* were less likely to provide good service internally to their peers.

In contrast, the analysis of creativity, problem solving, decision-making vigilance and need for affiliation showed no significant effects. This may be because the employees may not have been in a position to exercise creativity or problem solving at work. Also, the level of vigilance during decision-making and need for affiliation maybe a personality specific characteristics which are not affected by the attitudes in their work environment. The results also showed no significant differences between the sexes on perceptions of *tall poppy* attitudes, nor associations with age of employees or tenure.

Theoretical and Practical Importance of the Results

The results of this study indicate that participants who have colleagues that favoured the fall of *tall poppies*, differed in their decision-making style. In order to examine these

results further a definition of decision-making styles is needed. Leykin and DeRubeis, (2010) defined decision-making styles as:

“... theorized to be stable, traitlike patterns of approach to situations that call for a decision” (p. 506).

Leykin and DeRubeis, (2010) explain that decision-making styles represent likelihood of specific behaviours in different contexts and situations; meaning participants who scored low on the dependent decision-making style were expected to have a none-dependent approach to decision-making situations most of the time; rather than to have a dependent approach, i.e, including other people in their process of decision-making. Moreover, a participant who scored highly in avoidant decision-making style is expected to avoid decision-making in different contexts or situations, rather than making decisions head on. Therefore, a breakdown of these results and possible effects based on current literature are provided below.

Dependent Decision-Making

In this study when making decisions employees working in an environment that favoured the fall of *tall poppies* appeared to be less dependent on others. They were less likely to seek out assistance, advice, or allow themselves to be steered in the right direction by their peers when making decisions. Although some work functions do not require the input of employee's peers, other functions in working environments can often benefit from openness to joint decision-making. A key benefit of approaching peers when making-decisions, is the attainment of an outside perspective.

According to Levi, (2011) group decision-making can be superior to individual decision-making, if the group is successful at sharing resources. Sharing resources such as knowledge and past experience are especially important in decision-making, as these can help

to reduce the risk of making incorrect decisions (Levi, 2011). Different individuals also bring unique skills required for decision-making. Sharing thoughts with others about the given situation allows employees to brain-storm and come up with diverse ideas for different solutions (Levi, 2011). Diverse ideas and knowledge can lead to better solutions and therefore higher quality decision-making (Levi, 2011). The process of communicating in a group itself is useful; employee communication skills and how efficiently they make decisions can improve as a result (Levi, 2011). This study can speculate as to why participants in the negative environment prefer to make decisions independently. If employee's decision-making is more self-dependent because of the negative *tall poppy* environment, organizations may benefit from *tall poppy syndrome* awareness raising seminars and team building activities. Team building activities have been found to improve interpersonal relations, role clarification and problem solving (Klein, et al., 2009). There is a possibility that many participants in this study were in jobs that are more autonomous than group oriented, therefore the results should be interpreted with caution.

Decision-Making Avoidance

In this study hypothesis 3 was confirmed, when making decisions participants whose colleagues favoured the fall of *tall poppies*, appeared to be exhibiting more decision-making avoidant behaviours, such as postponing decision-making and procrastinating. Avoidance and procrastination are often seen as interchangeable, bearing the same meaning; procrastination is defined as “avoidance of the execution of an intended action” (Van Eerde, 2003, p. 442), while decision making avoidance is “the tendency to avoid or postpone decision-making” (Spicer & Sadler-Smith, 2005, p138). Procrastination is said to be an ongoing cycle, a participant may avoid making a decision because of little time or uncertainty, and in turn reduce the amount of time they have to make the decision (Van Eerde, 2003). This can increase the amount of pressure the employee experiences day to day (Van Eerde, 2003). As

expected, decision-making avoidance is associated with higher levels of stress (Leykin & DeRubeis, 2010). Avoidant decision-making behaviours such as these can be harmful in most organizational structures, as they can slow down work processes. Furthermore, prolonging making a work decision can have effects on peer work productivity especially if the employee works in an organization that is decentralised in their decision-making, meaning decisions are made by those carrying out their implementation (Kalliath, Brough, O'Driscoll, Manimala, & Siu, 2011).

Procrastination can often be evaded with time-management training as demonstrated in the findings of a study conducted by Van Eerde, (2003). Van Eerde found that participants, after only one month of time management training, displayed a better ability to manage their time at work. If decision-making avoidance is a product of a *tall poppy* environment, it is assumed that the fear of being criticized by peers is the cause of this negative behaviour (Kirkwood, 2007). Therefore, organizations would be advised to hold seminars and raise awareness among employees of the damaging effects *tall poppy syndrome* may have, in the hope of improving the general attitudes towards high achievers or *tall poppies*.

Internal Service Quality

Internal service quality is defined as the level of service quality an employee delivers to their colleagues; this includes the process of delivering that service (Boshoff & Mels, 1995). The nature of the association predicted was confirmed; indeed service quality is negatively associated with negative attitudes towards *tall poppies*. According to Boshoff and Mels, (1995) poor internal service quality among colleagues is likely to impact service quality offered to external clients; poor service quality can be extremely damaging to a business, because it often results in a severe reduction of return clients. Ehrhart, Witt, Schneider, and

Perry, (2011) found that employee perceptions of internal service quality was an important catalyst in relation to how different branches operated within one financial service organization. The level of internal service quality effected service climate; which in turn was reflected in the level of external service quality the employees provided to their external clients. A positive climate acted as a mediator between internal and external service provided by the employees. These results were incongruence with the findings of Bouranta, Chitiris and Paravantis, (2009) who reported that hospitality employees that were moderately to highly satisfied with internal service received from their peers, were providing better service which yielded happier customers. Based on the literature, organizations should consider improving external service quality by focusing their efforts on organizational climate and culture, as satisfied employees appear to yield satisfied clients (Bouranta, Chitiris, & Paravantis, 2009).

Exceptions to the *Tall Poppy Syndrome* Rule

Although *tall poppy syndrome* appears to potentially have negative influences at work, New Zealand continues to produce some of the most exceptional athletes in the world. There is no denying how passionate New Zealanders are about their sports and backing their sports teams such as the All Blacks. Could this mean that there are exceptions to the *tall poppy syndrome* rule?

As previously stated Feather, Volkmer and Mckee (1991) found that participants had generally more positive attitudes towards sport figures, than to political or entertainment figures. Perhaps looking at individual New Zealand sports men and their histories may provide some answers. The first sportsman to be discussed is Stephen "Beaver" Donald who was heavily criticised after he missed a penalty kick at the 2010 Bledisloe Cup in Hong-Kong

against Australia. Donald was targeted by talkback radio; he was victim to hate mail, and other media such as cartoonist Tom Scott who depicted Donald's involvement in the (then) upcoming 2011 Rugby World Cup, as a nightmare. Donald even bared abuse from rugby fans in the grandstands of rugby grounds during Super Rugby competition (Reid, 2014). Just one year later Donald became a Rugby World Cup champion (2011), after he made a penalty kick that ultimately resulted in victory for the All Blacks over France.

John Campbell Live was on the scene reporting the aftermath of the game:

“What a night it's been, it is only a sport, world peace won't be achieved unemployment won't be solved, people won't suddenly be cured of terrible illnesses but it's our sport, it's our national sport, and tonight we can truly say we are the best in world at it..” (Campbell Live , 2011).

It is a message of collectiveness; we are the best in the world as a nation; it was an important win for the country (Campbell, Live , 2011). In an interview after the game Donald received his greatest praise, he expressed how proud he was to be a New Zealander (Reid, 2014).

Donald was alone in failure, but a part of a collective in success. It appears that New Zealand has the desire to be the best and stand tall among others but as a country, having collective pride. It appears that we applaud those who are successful at representing the entire country and tear down those who failed; we stand together in victory but alone in defeat.

If there is truth to this, then perhaps to be immune to *tall poppy syndrome* is to be an outstanding athlete of countless wins representing New Zealand. One of the men fitting that description is All Black Captain, Richie McCaw. McCaw is renowned for breaking many rugby records such; as 81 wins as a captain, 129 Tests as a forward, 92 Tests as a captain, 23 tries (more than any forward in history), 114 wins, and 11 tries against Australia which is the

most by any one player against one team (SANZAR Super Rugby, 2014). On top of an exceptional sporting record, McCaw is often described by the media as “humble” (Sports News First, 2012; Asprey, 2014), which is in congruence with the country’s traditions; all evidence leads to the assumption that if it was possible to escape *tall poppy syndrome* then this is the man who would do it. However, McCaw displayed awareness of *tall poppy syndrome* throughout his career; when accused of cheating, McCaw was reported to have brushed it off as *tall poppy syndrome*; in 2010 he was reported explaining to schoolchildren that “jealousy and *tall poppy syndrome* could be a problem for leaders” (Robinson, 2010). It seems that regardless of who you are, you cannot escape *tall poppy syndrome*; the only option is to accept it, to raise awareness and change it by cultivating a healthy environment of support, constructive criticism and encouragement.

Limitations

Although this study resulted in some interesting findings, it is not without limitations. Firstly, there is no way of telling whether the *tall poppy* environment affected participant behaviour; it is only possible to speculate about associations. Participants, who exhibited dependent and avoidant decision-making behaviours, may have been more sensitive to a *tall poppy* environment. Yet it is just as possible that the *tall poppy* behaviours fostered a negative environment, which caused escalation of negative decision-making behaviours. Secondly, this study used self-report measures, which have their own limitations, one of which is social desirability. According to Paulhus, (2002) social desirability is often explained as the act of giving positive self-descriptions. On questions such as “When I work, I am dressed well and appear neat’ and “My business records are error free” participants may have responded as being more neat and having less business error to appear in a more positive light. Survey data is generally partial to response bias; one *tall poppy* scale question in

particular may have resulted in some bias responses because it contained the words “*tall poppy*”. However, blocks of questions were randomized to control for bias and order effects.

Strengths

This study is the first to suggest that *tall poppy syndrome* behaviours may be damaging to the performance of all employees, rather than just *tall poppies*. Up until this study, most *tall poppy* research focused on the way *tall poppies* were perceived and why. One study investigated the effects of *tall poppy syndrome* on entrepreneurs and how they coped with these effects. The data in this study surveyed employees from a wide range of work environments. It is a true haphazard study; the sample consisted of participants from different disciplines, as well as different levels of proficiency such as CEO’s, managers and entry level employees; job titles included labourers, consultant, retail staff, educators engineer, pharmacist, nurse, web-developer, correction officer, café assistant, chief, accountant, truck driver, medic, courier, army officer, psychologist, electrician, designer, sales manager, business developer, librarian, food writer, painter and decorator, builder, teacher, producer and director, personal assistant and others.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future studies should consider finding a way to test performance directly, such as reviewing manager reports or performance evaluations a long side of *tall poppy* scale scores. Scales should also be more work specific; rather than asking about how the participants make decisions, ask about how the participants makes decisions in particular contexts. Researchers should also consider studying particular organizations, recording differences among departments; as the severity of *tall poppy syndrome* behaviours may vary between departments. Researchers should also consider including self-esteem and perceived

competence in their list of measures as previous research conducted by Feather (1991) confirmed that both are related to attitudes towards *tall poppies*.

Conclusion

In this study *tall poppy syndrome* attitudes were associated with some negative work outcomes as predicted. *Tall poppy syndrome* appears to be deeply rooted in New Zealand's cultural history, it is thought of as the ugly side to values New Zealanders holds in great esteem: modestly, humility. Few seem to be immune from *tall poppy syndrome*; it is here to stay for now, and for these reasons, the effects it may have on work behaviour, motivation and attitudes should be studied further. Attitudes are capable of changing and awareness and understanding is the first step toward creating a positive change.

References

- Asprey, B. (2014, January 3). *Life after rugby for Richie McCaw*. Retrieved from Rugby World: <http://www.rugbyworld.com/countries/new-zealand-countries/richie-mccaws-post-rugby-plan-34267>
- Boshoff, C., & Mels, G. (1995). A causal model to evaluate the relationships among supervision, role stress, organizational commitment and internal service quality. *European Journal of Marketing* , 23-42.
- Bouranta, N., Chitiris, L., & Paravantis, J. (2009). The relationship between internal and external service quality. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 275 - 293.
- Brown, J. R. (1946). *Livy; Book I*. London: Blackie and Son Limited.
- Campbell, Live . (2011, October 24). *Campbell Live - All Blacks Win Rugby World Cup 2011*. Retrieved from Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UhEpas8hxYI>
- Clark, H. (2009, April 8). Clark, Helen: Valedictory Statement. *New Zealand Parliament* . Retrieved 11 25, 2014, from http://www.parliament.nz/en-nz/pb/debates/debates/speeches/49HansS_20090408_00001088/clark-helen-valedictory-statement
- Cross, T. L. (2001). The Rage of Gifted Students. *Gifted Child Today*. Spring2001, Vol. 24 Issue 2, p43. 3p, p. 43.
- Dewberry, C., Juanchich, M., & Nar, S. (2013). Decision-making competence in everyday life: The roles of general cognitive styles, decision-making styles and personality. *Personality and Individual Differences* , 783–788.
- Dion , K. K., & Dion, K. L. (1993). Individualistic and Collectivistic Perspectives on Gender and the Cultural Context of Love and Intimacy. *Journal of Social Issues*, 53-69.

- Ehrhart, K. H., Witt, L. A., Schneider, B., & Perry, S. J. (2011). Service Employees Give as They Get: Internal Service as a Moderator of the Service Climate–Service Outcomes Link. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 423–431.
- Facebook 2015. (2015). *Facebook Proudct/Service*. Retrieved from Facebook:
https://www.facebook.com/facebookNZ/info?tab=page_info
- Feather, N. T. (1991). Attitudes Towards the High Achiever: Effects of Perceiver's Own Level of Competence. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 121-124.
- Feather, N. T. (1989). Attitudes Towards the High Achiever: The Fall of the Tall Poppy. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 239-267.
- Feather, N. T., Volkmer, R. E., & McKee, I. R. (1991). Attitudes towards High Achivers in Public Life; Attributions, Deservingness, Personalit and Affect. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 85-91.
- Forlong, M. (Director). (1949). *Meet New Zealand* [Motion Picture]. Retrieved from
<http://www.nzonscreen.com/title/meet-new-zealand>
- George, J. M., & Zhong, J. (2007). Dual Tuning in a Supportive Context: Joint Contributions of Positive Mood, Negative Mood and Supervisory Behaviours to Employee Creativity. *Academy of Management Journal*, 605–622.
- Green, S. B. (1991). How Many Subjects does it Take to do a Regression Analysis. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 499-510.
- Grey, P. (2007). *Psychology: Fith Edition*. New York : Worth Publishers .
- Gross, M. U. (2010). The pursuit of excellence or the search for intimacy?The forced-choice dilemma of gifted youth. *Roepers Review*, 189-194.
- Hamid, P. N. (1994). Self-Monitoring, Locus of Control, and Social Encounters of Chinese and New Zealand Students. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 353-368.

- Heckert, T. M., Cuneio, G., Hannah, A. P., Adams, P. J., Droste, H. E., Mueller, M. A., . . . Roberts, L. L. (1999). Creation of a New Needs Assessment Questionnaire. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, 121-136.
- Heppner, P. P., & Petersen, C. H. (1982). The Development and Implications of a Personal Problem Solving Inventory . *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 66-75.
- Hui, H. C., & Triandis, H. C. (1986). Individualism-Collectivism; A Study of Cross-Cultural Researchers . *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* , 225-248.
- Kalliath, T., Brough, P., O'Driscoll, M., Manimala, M. J., & Siu, O.-I. (2011). *Organizational Behaviour; A Psychological perspective for the Asia-Pacific*. North Ryde NSW: McGraw-Hill Australia Pty Ltd.
- Kirkwood, J. (2007). Tall Poppy Syndrome: Implications for entrepreneurship in New Zealand. *Journal of Management and Organization*.
- Klein, C., DiazGranados, D., Salas, E., Le, H., Burke, S. C., & Lyons, R. (2009). Does Team Building Work? *Small Group Research*, 181-222.
- Levi, D. (2011). *Group Dynamics for Teams*. London: Sage Publications.
- Leykin, Y., & DeRubeis, R. J. (2010). Decision-making styles and depressive symptomatology:Development of the Decision Styles Questionnaire. *Judgment and Decision Making*, 506–515.
- LinkedIn Corporation . (2003). *About LinkedIn*. Retrieved from LinkedIn:
<https://press.linkedin.com/about-linkedin>
- MacPherson, L. (2013, October 5). *2013 Census Usually Resident Population Counts*. Retrieved from Statistics New Zealand:
http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/population/census_counts/2013CensusUsuallyResidentPopulationCounts_HOTP2013Census.aspx

- Malhotra, N., & Mukherjee, A. (2003). Analysing the Commitment - Service Quality Relationship: A Comparative Study of Retail Banking Call Centres and Branches. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 941-971.
- McLintock, A. H.; Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand. (1966). An Equalitarian Society. *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*. Retrieved from <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/1966/new-zealand-society-its-characteristics/page-2>
- Ministry for Culture and Heritage. (2014, October 15). *Old-age Pensions Act becomes law*. Retrieved from New Zealand History: <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/old-age-pensions-act-passes-into-law>
- Nolan, M. (2007). The reality and myth of New Zealand egalitarianism: Explaining the pattern of labour history at the edge of empires. *Labour History Review*, 113-134.
- Oxford Dictionary of English. (2010). *Oxford Dictionary of English*. (A. Stevenson, Ed.) New York: Oxford University Press.
- Parker, D. (2014, July 5). *SPEECH: David Parker's speech to New Zealand Labour Party Congress 2014*. Retrieved from Labour: <https://www.labour.org.nz/media/speech-david-parkers-speech-new-zealand-labour-party-congress-2014>
- Paulhus, D. L. (2002). Socially Desirable Responding: The Evolution of a Construct. In H. I. Braun, D. N. Jackson, & D. E. Wiley, *The Role of Constructs in Psychological and Educational Measurement* (pp. 49-69). Mahwah New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Ranstead, W. (1900, March 22). *Nothing to Kick At*. Retrieved from Paper Past: <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&d=PBH19000322.2.32>
- Reid, N. (2014, August 3). *ABs' Stephen Donald opens up on public abuse*. Retrieved from Stuff.co.nz: <http://i.stuff.co.nz/sport/rugby/international/10342035/ABs-Stephen-Donald-opens-up-on-public-abuse>

- Robinson, V. (2010, July 1). *Richie McCaw gets in behind Red Socks Day*. Retrieved from Stuff.co.nz: <http://i.stuff.co.nz/sport/other-sports/3875004/Richie-McCaw-gets-in-behind-Red-Socks-Day>
- SANZAR Super Rugby. (2014, August 26). *More word records for McCaw*. Retrieved from The Rugby Championship: <http://www.sanzarrugby.com/therugbychampionship/news/more-world-records-for-mccaw/>
- Shulruf, B., Hattie, J., & Dixon, R. (2007). Development of a New Measurement Tool for Individualism and Collectivism. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, 385-401.
- Spicer, D. P., & Sadler-Smith, E. (2005). An examination of the general decision making style questionnaire in two UK samples. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 137-149.
- Sport24: Sports News First. (2012, October 9). *SA in awe of Richie McCaw*. Retrieved from Sport24: Sports News. First: <http://www.sport24.co.za/Rugby/RugbyChampionship/South-Africans-in-awe-of-McCaw-20121009>
- Stevenson, A. (Ed.). (2010). *Oxford Dictionary of English* (3 ed.). United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.
- Tapper, C. L. (2014). *Being in the World of School; Phenomenological Exploration of Experiences for Gifted and Talented Adolescents. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.* Christchurch, New Zealand.
- Taylor, A. (2013, March 18). *Does NZ still cut down tall poppies?* Retrieved from 3NEWSNZ: <http://www.3news.co.nz/nznews/does-nz-still-cut-down-tall-poppies-2013031807#axzz3PANUDsWg>
- Television New Zealand Limited. (2013, July 2). *Tall Poppies and Our Children*. Retrieved from TVNZ: <http://tvnz.co.nz/breakfast-news/tall-poppies-and-our-children-video-5484159>

- Van Eerde, W. (2003). Procrastination at Work and Time Management. *The Journal of Psychology* , 412-434.
- Weisberg, H. F., & Bowden, B. D. (1977). *An Introduction to Survey research and Data Analysis*. San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Company .
- Zhou, J., & George, J. M. (2001). When job dissatisfaction leads to creativity: encourages the expression of voice . *Academy of Management Journal* , 682-696.
- Zuckerman, M., & Allison, S. N. (1976). An Objective Measure of Fear of Success: Construction and Validation. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 422-430.

Appendices

Appendix A - Message and link posted in groups

Hi All!

My name is Anna Dediu and I am a Canterbury University Masters student looking for participants to take part in my thesis survey.
I am conducting research on the possible effects of work context on work performance.

If you are:

- ***Working full-time in New Zealand please take part by clicking below***

-----> http://canterbury.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_aeZblUP8i5PNW7j

Filling out the survey should take approximately 5 to 10 minutes.

You will be given the opportunity to sign up **and go into the draw to win one of three Westfield vouchers (\$25.00, \$50.00, \$150.00) this is optional.** Your details for the prize draw will be held separately with your survey responses.

You may receive a copy of the project results by contacting the researcher at the conclusion of the project (December 2014).

Participation is voluntary and anonymous.

I would really appreciate your participation. Please share the link with others who work full time in New Zealand.

Kind regards,
Anna Dediu

Appendix B – List of LinkedIn (30) groups posted in and member numbers in each group

APSY Alumni (Master's in Applied Psychology, University of Canterbury) - 193
 Career Medical Recruitment - Medical Careers in Australia and New Zealand - 1,713
 Christchurch Rebuild Jobs & info New Zealand (NZ Construction, Infrastructure & Civil Engineering – 3,879
 Consumer Psychology – 4,940
 Construction, Engineering and Property Professionals in New Zealand - 768
 Design Assembly NZ – 1,195
 Energy Professionals New Zealand – 2,654
 Human Resources Institute of New Zealand (HRINZ) – 6,512
 I/O Careers - Network of Industrial Organizational Psychologists (IOP) – 19,091
 IBM Business Analytics software - A/NZ - 924
 Leadership New Zealand – 2,674
 Marketing Association | New Zealand - 2,967
 New Zealand Food & Beverage – 1,528
 New Zealand Business and Professional Network - 33,739
 NZ QS PQS Estimator Cost Consultant, Professional PM's: New Zealand Christchurch Auckland Wellington - 748
 New Zealand ICT – 3,674
 New Zealand Infrastructure & Construction – 2,570
 New Zealand Telco Professionals Network – 1,827
 New Zealand Science and Innovation – 1,662
 New Zealand Telecommunications – 4,790
 NZ Businesses Going Global – 1,040
 New Zealand Jobs – 6,712
 New Zealand Tourism Industry Blog -1,524
 Research Association NZ - 378
 Social Media New Zealand - 2,793
 New Zealand Film and TV Network 3,459
 Women on Boards NZ – 997
 Women of Influence NZ – 565
 Tourism & Hospitality New Zealand – 1,810
 New Zealand HR and Recruitment Network - 4,161

Appendix C - Facebook Advert

**Work Survey**
Sponsored

This page links you to the Work Survey, please click the link below and complete the survey if you are working full-time in New Zealand.

**Work Survey**
[JFE.QUALTRICS.COM](https://jfe.qualtrics.com)

Appendix D - Reminder message posted two weeks before closing date

Work Survey Reminder- closing soon

Hi All, this is a reminder that the Work Survey will be officially closed on the 7th of September 2014, a huge thanks you to all those that have already completed the survey. If you would still like to participate in the survey please read the information and click the link below:

My name is Anna Dediu and I am a Canterbury University Masters student looking for participants to take part in my thesis survey. I am conducting research on the possible effects of work context on work performance.

If you are:

- ***Working full-time in New Zealand please take part by clicking below***

-----> http://canterbury.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_aeZblUP8i5PNW7j

Filling out the survey should take approximately 5 to 10 minutes.

You will be given the opportunity to sign up **and go into the draw to win one of three Westfield vouchers (\$25.00, \$50.00, \$150.00) this is optional.** Your details for the prize draw will be held separately with your survey responses.

You may receive a copy of the project results by contacting the researcher at the conclusion of the project (December 2014).

Participation is voluntary and anonymous.

I would really appreciate your participation. Please share the link with others who work full time in New Zealand.

Kind regards,
Anna Dediu

Appendix E - Work Survey

Information and Consent for Survey Participant

My name is Anna Dediu and I am a Canterbury University Masters student. I am conducting research on the possible effects of work context on work performance. Your involvement in this project will be to fill out the survey provided as honestly as possible. Filling out the survey should take approximately 5 to 10 minutes. You may receive a copy of the project results by contacting the researcher at the conclusion of the project. Participation is voluntary and anonymous, once the survey is completed and handed in, it will not be possible to withdraw your survey responses. Upon completion of the survey you will be given the opportunity to sign up and go into the draw to win one of three Westfield vouchers (\$25.00, \$50.00, \$150.00), this is optional. Your details for the prize draw will not be held with your survey responses. The results of the project may be published, but you may be assured of the complete confidentiality of data gathered in this investigation: your identity will not be known. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, the data will be accessed by the researcher and supervisor only. The data will be securely stored and destroyed after five years. A thesis is a public document and will be available through the UC Library. The project is being carried out as a requirement for Masters Dissertation by Anna Dediu under the supervision of Chris Burt, who can be contacted by email at christopher.burt@canterbury.ac.nz. He will be pleased to discuss any concerns you may have about participation in the project. This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, and participants should address any complaints to The Chair, Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz).

Consent Form I understand what is required of me if I agree to take part in the research. I understand that participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without penalty. Withdrawal of participation will also include the withdrawal of any information I have provided should this remain practically achievable. I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher Anna Dediu and research supervisor Chris Burt and that any published or reported results will not identify the participants. I understand that a thesis is a public document and will be available through the UC Library. I understand that all data collected for the study will be kept in locked and secure facilities and/or in password protected electronic form and will be destroyed after five years. I understand the risks associated with taking part and how they will be managed. I understand that I am able to receive a report on the findings of the study by contacting the researcher at the conclusion of the project. I understand who to contact if I have concerns. I have read and understood the information above and I agreed to participate in this study:

Q1.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No is Selected, Then Skip to End of Survey

Q2. What is your gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Q3. What is your age?

Q4. What is your job title?

Q5. How long have you worked in your current job? (Years, Months)

Q6. How long have you worked in your current industry? (Years, Months)

Q7. How many co-workers with whom you regularly interact with, do you have?

Q8. Please think about how employees in your organization generally feel about others. For each statement below please give a rating to indicate if you agree or disagree that other employees in your organization generally feel like this. Employees in my Organization...

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
...feel people who are very successful deserve all the rewards they get for their achievements (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...feel it's good to see very successful people fail occasionally (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...feel very successful people often get too big for their boots (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...feel people shouldn't criticize or knock the very successful (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...feel very successful people who fall from the top usually deserve their fall from grace (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...feel those who are very successful ought to come down off their pedestals and be like other people (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...feel very successful people should receive public recognition for their accomplishments (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...feel people that are "Tall Poppies" should be cut down to size (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...feel one should always respect the person at the top (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...feel one ought to be sympathetic to very successful people when they experience failure and fall from their very high positions (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...feel very successful people sometimes need to be brought back a peg or two, even if they have done nothing wrong (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...feel people who always do a lot better than others need to learn what it's like to fail (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...feel people who are right at the top usually deserve their high position (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

...feel it is very important to support and encourage people who are very successful (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...feel people who are very successful get too full of their own importance (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...feel very successful people usually succeed at the expense of other people (16)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... feel very successful people who are at the top of their field are usually fun to be with (17)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. Please think about the following statements, and to what degree they describe you. For each statement below, please give a rating to indicate if you agree or disagree with the statement.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
When I work I am well dressed and appear neat (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I promise to do something by a certain time, I do it (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do things right the first time (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My business record is error-free (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When problems occur I try to solve them as soon as possible (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I treat all co-workers courteously (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am knowledgeable about the company I work for and the products and services it offers (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When problems occur I give the co-workers all my attention in an effort to solve the problems speedily (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have the best interests of the organization at heart (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q10. Please think about the following statements, and to what degree they describe you. For each statement below, please give a rating to indicate if you agree or disagree with the statement.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I suggest new ways to achieve goals or objectives (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I come up with new and practical ideas to improve performance (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I search out new technologies, processes, techniques, and/or product ideas (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I suggest new ways to increase quality (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am a good source of creative ideas (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am not afraid to take risks (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I promote and champion ideas to others (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I exhibit creativity on the job when given the opportunity (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I develop adequate plans and schedules for the implementation of new ideas (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often have new and innovative ideas (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I come up with creative solutions (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often have a fresh approach to problems (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I suggest new way of performing work tasks (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q11. Please think about the following statements, and to what degree they describe you. For each statement below, please give a rating to indicate if you agree or disagree with the statement.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I don't make decisions unless I really have to (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I postpone decision-making whenever possible (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I procrastinate when it comes to making important decisions (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I put off making many decisions because thinking about them makes me uneasy (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I worry that making a decision will close out other options, so I postpone the decision (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not seek advice from others when I make decisions (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to have someone to steer me in the right direction when I'm faced with important decisions (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I need the assistance of other people when making important decisions (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use the advice of other people in making my important decisions (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I have the support of others it is easier for me to make important decisions (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I need to make a decision, I consult family or friends (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When making decisions I like to collect lots of information (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to consider all the alternatives (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I try to be clear about my objectives before choosing (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I weigh the pros and cons of each option before I make a decision (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My decision making requires careful thought (16)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When making a decision, I consider various options in terms of specific goals (17)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q12. Please think about the following statements, and to what degree they describe you. For each statement below, please give a rating to indicate if you agree or disagree with the statement.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I try to perform my best at work (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am a hard worker (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is important to me to do the best job possible (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I push myself to be "all that I can be." (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I try very hard to improve on my past performance at work (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I spend a lot of time talking to other people (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am a "people" person (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I have a choice, I try to work in a group instead of by myself (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I prefer to do my own work and let others do theirs (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I try my best to work alone on a work assignment (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q13. Please think about the following statements, and to what degree they describe you. For each statement below, please give a rating to indicate if you agree or disagree with the statement.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I am usually able to think up creative and effective alternatives to solve a problem (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have the ability to solve most problems even though initially no solution is immediately apparent (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Many problems I face are too complex for me to solve (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I make decisions and am happy with them later (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

When I make plans to solve a problem, I am almost certain that I can make them work (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Given enough time and effort, I believe I can solve most problems that confront me (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When faced with a novel situation I have confidence that I can handle problems that may arise (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I trust my ability to solve new and difficult problems (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After making a decision, the outcome I expected usually matches the actual outcome (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When confronted with a problem, I am unsure of whether I can handle the situation (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I become aware of a problem, one of the first things I do is to try to find out exactly what the problem is (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q14. Thank you for completing the survey! If you wish to go into the draw to win one of three Westfield vouchers click yes

- Yes (1)
 No, thanks (2)

If No, thanks is Selected, Then Skip to End of Survey

Q15. If you wish to go into the draw to win one of three Westfield vouchers (\$25.00, \$50.00, \$150.00) please enter your details here:

- Name (1)
Email (2)
Phone Number (3)

Q16. Thank you!